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PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Frosh Issues Statement on Removal of the “Talbot Boys” Monument

BALTIMORE, MD (August 11, 2021) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today issued the following statement:

“Situated prominently on the front lawn of the Talbot County Courthouse in Easton, Maryland, a 6-foot monument greets jurors, litigants, witnesses, courthouse employees and other members of the public. It is inscribed, ‘To the Talbot Boys.’ The statue depicts a soldier with a Confederate flag draped over his shoulder and pays tribute to 96 local men who fought for the Confederacy and whose names are inscribed in the statue’s base. Many of the men were slave owners or belonged to slave-owning families.

“Most monuments honoring those who fought on behalf of the Confederacy were not erected in the years following the end of the Civil War or in cemeteries where fallen soldiers had been traditionally honored. Rather, support for these statues spiked around 50 years later, during Jim Crow segregation, where their placement in city centers and around government buildings could reinforce the country’s racial hierarchy and its rejection of the gains made during Reconstruction. In the 1950s and 60s, as support for civil rights began to swell, the erection of Confederate monuments surged once again.

“Courthouses are places where our State and federal constitutions guarantee equal justice under the law. Like similar monuments erected during the Jim Crow era and beyond, the ‘Talbot Boys’ belies this promise. It serves as a painful reminder not just of the deadly acts many committed to support slavery and the degradation of Blacks. Worse, it suggests that these ideals are still endorsed within our most critical institutions. It is not simply a vestige of slavery and white supremacy from long ago, but a sign of enduring resistance to racial equality.

“For years, the Talbot County NAACP and other community members have lobbied for the ‘Talbot Boys’ statue to be taken down and recently joined with the Office of the Public Defender to sue the County for its removal. But residents of Talbot County should not have to await the end of protracted litigation to rid public property of this documented symbol of hatred, intimidation, and inequality. It’s time for the ‘Talbot Boys’ to go.”

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2021/081121.pdf>